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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, December 10, 1931.

(Not For Publication.)

Subject: "Questions and a Two-Part Menu." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A., and the Bureau of Fisheries, U.S.D.C.

Bulletin available: "Goldfish: Their Care in Small Aquaria and Ponds." Order from the Bureau of Fisheries, U. S. Department of Commerce.

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Can a meal be very, very simple, but also well-balanced and nourishing? Can a meal be well-planned and satisfying, yet composed of just three things — soup, salad and hot bread?

"Yes, indeed," says the Menu Specialist.

And, what's more, she proves it by giving me a menu for a noon meal or a supper of just this sort. Here's the menu: Cream of Spinach soup with crisp crackers; Fruit salad made with grapes, apples, pineapple, banana and marshmallows cut up and served on lettuce with fruit salad dressing, served with Hot, orange-turnover biscuit.

I have a word to say about each of the three items on that good but "different" menu.

First about the soup. For winter menus especially, I'm a booster for cream soups. They offer such a delicious and convenient way of serving those two valuable foods — milk and vegetables. Cream soups may be made from almost any of the common vegetables by combining either the pulp of the cooked vegetable or the raw vegetable chopped very fine with white sauce. Press the cooked vegetable through a strainer; then heat it, and pour it into the hot, thin white sauce in the upper part of the double boiler. Thin white sauce is made in the proportion of one cup of milk to 1 tablespoon each of fat and flour. Let the mixture come to the boiling point, remove it from the heat, and whip it for a minute with an egg beater. Serve it at once. Or, as in the spinach soup on our menu today, you can heat the milk in a double boiler, add to it the flour and fat well-blended and then the vegetable and salt. Stir until it is thickened and then cook for about ten minutes.

Oh, dear. I meant to say before I started all that about cooking the white sauce and so on that this cream of spinach soup — the one given in the green cookbook on page 12 — is made with a cup of raw ground or finely chopped spinach. It is put in with the hot milk and the blended flour and fat and cooked along with the rest for about ten minutes. This saves time and makes the best spinach soup I ever tasted.



Left-over bits of vegetables, meat or fish can be used in cream soups by putting the material through a meat grinder, heating it in a little liquid before straining and adding it to the hot white sauce.

Colorful vegetables make especially attractive looking soups. Spinach soup, for example, is good to look at and good to taste. The dark green of the vegetable combined with the white sauce makes a very pleasant pale green shade. A dash of paprika on top or perhaps some finely chopped parsley adds to its attractive appearance. Tomatoes also make an attractively colored cream soup. Ask the children. By the way, these two cream soups are especially recommended for young children. They contain both milk and those good minerals and vitamins for health and growth which have made tomatoes and spinach such celebrities in the food line.

So much for the soup.

Now the fruit salad. May I mention a point or two about making a success of that salad? Be sure that all juice is drained off the fruit before you mix it with the salad dressing and serve it on the lettuce. Be sure the fruit is cold and carefully prepared. Add the dressing to the fruit only at the last minute. Some meticulous housekeepers fix grapes for salad by peeling them, then cutting them in half and removing the seeds. That's a job that takes a long time. Some housekeepers always peel apples for salad. It's a matter of taste and time, I guess. But, as for me, I choose nice red apples, wash them well, core and dice them. That's all. Grapes I wash, cut in half and seed. I like to leave the skins on to give color to the salad. Of course, bananas and apples should be cut up only at the last minute or they are likely to turn dark. Acid fruit juice, like lemon juice, helps keep them from discoloring. Did I mention shears in connection with this salad? I meant to. Your kitchen shears will come in handy in making the salad. There's nothing as convenient as shears to snip up marshmallows with.

Our recipe for today is the third item on the menu -- hot, orange-turnover biscuit. Ever try one of these biscuits? They're a treat. For those without cookbooks -- such people, fortunately, are becoming fewer and fewer -- but for them, I'll now give the recipe for orange turnover biscuit. It's a rather long one. Yes, Amanda, I'll try to give the directions very slowly.

Ingredients? Eight. Here they are.

2 cups sifted, soft-wheat flour
4 teaspoons of baking powder
1 teaspoon of salt
3 tablespoons of fat

2/3 cup of milk
1/4 cup of melted butter
Grated orange rind, and
Sugar.

I'll go over that list once more. (REPEAT)

First, sift the dry ingredients and cut in the fat with a biscuit cutter. Make a well in the mixture and add the milk slowly; stir from the center with a fork until a fairly stiff dough is formed. Knead for a few seconds until smooth. Roll out about one-fourth inch thick on a lightly floured board, cut with a small biscuit cutter, and fold over like a pocketbook roll. Dip quickly in the melted



butter, drain and put in a baking pan. To each tablespoon of grated orange rind, add 1 tablespoon of butter and mix well. With the tip of the knife, place a small quantity of the orange and sugar mixture between the folds of the biscuits and spread a little over the top. Bake in a moderately hot oven (375 degrees F.) until lightly browned. Serve at once. Very nice with fruit salad.

Somebody wrote me recently asking for advice on the care and training -- also the feeding -- of a pet goldfish. His name, by the way, is Oscar. Oscar, it seems, is a very young fish, probably in his pre-school years still. We all know how important the pre-school period is in forming character for life. Well, the question is, how to provide the right environment and the right training for Oscar?

I'll have to tell the truth and admit that never, until I got that letter, did I consider the problem of raising goldfish on sound scientific principles. The nearest I ever came to it was an experience with a pet alligator I was given on my seventh birthday. I did my best for him but, just the same, he died two days after. That discouraged me from becoming an aquarist of any sort.

But I know where I can always get the best possible advice on goldfish -- or any other kind of fish. The Bureau of Fisheries is the place. Here's what the specialists there told me.

First, some rules for feeding. Feed tropical aquarium fish no more than they will eat within an hour, they say. These fish will naturally gorge themselves with food while it is available. The real danger in overfeeding comes from the spoilage of the uneaten food. Milky water is caused by aquatic bacteria which attack the left-over food in the water, and in doing this use up the water of its oxygen. When the fish are at the top, gasping for air, it is a sign something is wrong in the aquarium. The water may be freshened by pouring it back and forth several times with a dipper of some kind, holding the hand under the down-pour, just below the surface to prevent stirring up the sand or dislodging the plants. When this first-aid service has been performed, it is well then to clear up the bottom, by siphoning off the decaying food. Then add some fresh water of the same temperature as that in the aquarium. No food should be given until the water clears, if the bowl or tank is well-stocked with plants.

Fishes need vitamins in their diet. Though some of them may live a long time on dried foods alone, they rarely produce young on the standard prepared dried foods. To get the best results add lean meat, liver, yolk of hard-boiled egg, oysters and clams in small quantities.

Next comes the question of keeping the fishes contented in different kinds of weather. Most persons are successful with tropical fishes in summer but have difficulty in winter. The fishes are most comfortable when the temperature is around eighty, at which temperature they will breed during the winter months. But they can live at temperatures of nearly one hundred degrees. Sixty degrees is about the coldest they can live without chilling. When the temperature is likely to go even lower, the aquarium should be covered. More losses among fishes may be attributed to chilling than to any other cause.

Some time next week when I have a few extra minutes, I'll tell you some other facts I've just learned about goldfish.

Tomorrow we'll discuss the right toys for the young members of the family, and have a fine menu for a company Sunday night supper.

